In Hollis C-5 (ca. 1896-1904) 1903
FL12 Masai FL12

clain to belong to these two clanships. Hollis gives as the principal division these provinces, Kisongo, Loita, and Uasingishu. This is perhaps not according to Masai traditions, but is not incorrect as a practical description of the present distribution of the tribe. The Loita and Uasingishu, also known as Kisongo and Purko, are both subdivisions of the Kisongo district, of whom the former acquired importance by refusing to accept the present Laibon, Lenana, and following instead his brother Sendeyo. Besides these districts, there are four clans representing genealogical not territorial divisions: Aiser, Matgass, Mukeuon, and Kishiyan. The Aiser seem to enjoy a certain primacy. The medicine men all belong to this clan, which is specially connected with Mount Ngong (to the south of Kibwezi) also called Ol-donyo Lo-l-Aiser, the mountain of the Aiser.

According to the social system of the pastoral Masai the male sex is divided into boys, warriors, and elders. The first stage continues until circumcision, which may be performed any time between thirteen and seventeen, or sometimes in the case of poor people not till twenty. Those who are circumcised about the same time (see p. 28 for details) are said to belong to the same age, and are known collectively by a distinctive name, such as 'the White Swords' or 'the Invincibles.' After circumcision the warriors plait their hair, but, except for a small skin hanging over the shoulders, and their arm and ornaments which are described by Mr Hollis, go absolutely naked. They subsist entirely on meat, milk, and blood, and in particular may not smoke or touch intoxicants. They do not live with the married people, but in separate kraals with the immature unmarried girls, with whom they are allowed to cohabit freely. Tradition* (see p. 117) ascribes this practice to the fear that if girls were kept away from the society of their own warriors, they would let themselves be seduced by the enemy; but the remedy has been worse than the danger it was to avert. The direst physical evil is consumption, and is partly responsible for the diminishing numbers of the race. Besides this, female morality after such a girlhood was naturally low, even when the Masai kept to themselves. Now that they have come into contact with civilization, prostitution and venereal disease have become deplorably frequent. About the age of twenty-seven or thirty, or sometimes when raiding is forbidden somewhat earlier, a warrior marries and settles down. If he

* It is said that among the Dinka, Bari, and Shilluk there are similar customs of free love.

INTRODUCTION

and

23 hrs.

is a man of wealth and importance he may be elected chief[1], in which case he is responsible for the discipline of the warriors and their appearance when summoned to fight, though he does not go to the wars himself. As with most East African tribes an elder's chief of existence seems to be men not concerned with drudgeries. Proverb No. 6, to mean 'Don't lie with your feet against a post like the father of many sons', meaning 'Don't give yourself airs' is a vivid picture of the Masai pater familias taking his ease in the primitive posture of lying on his back with his feet against a post, while his family do all the work for him.

Masai women, unlike the men, are carefully dressed in leather garments, but a very real according to our ideas most interesting custom forces them to shave their heads. Before marriage they are circumcised, and signalize their change of state by wearing large circular earrings and necklaces of brass and iron wire. Both girls and women have their legs and arms covered in iron ornaments, so that they can scarcely walk.

The military organization of the Masai made them a most effective body for destructive military operations, and explains not only the predominant position which they acquired in East Africa, but also the respect which they inspired and the extent to which their customs were imitated by other tribes. On the other hand, it probably also is the reason why they never founded any state or polity analogous to the kingdoms of Uganda and Unyoro. The centre of political gravity was not with the elders or chiefs, but with a republic of young men, governed by ideas of military consistency and desirous only of military glory. Retirement from the land of warriors as a chief was honourable, but seems to have been recognized as a removal to an inferior sphere of activity. The chiefs managed the details of the raids which the warriors wished to undertake, but their power of compelling them to do anything which they did not wish was very slight.

The correct approach to a central and superior authority among the Masai is the medicine men or Laibon (more correctly Ol-oiboni; see p. 370, fn.). They all belong to the Kidongi family of the Ainer clan, and are said to be descended from a personage called Ol-le-Masiya, who came down from heaven and was found by the Ainer sitting on the top of Mount Ngong. This was nine generations ago, the genealogy having been preserved. The influence of the

[1] The chief is elected from the warriors, but forms their ranks at once and becomes an elder.

DIAGRAM IV. The overlapping rhythm in the entire complexity [illegible]

A = the preceding class
1 = left-hand unit of class A
B = a full single class
2 = right-hand unit of class B
3 = left-hand unit of class B
C = the succeeding class
4 = right-hand unit of class C

The Interrelations of Age-Classes. The rhythm of Maasai age-system seems to allow for five contemporary classes. All these classes differ in status and power according to their seniority as well as the efficiency of their individual members. We may thus distinguish between the *junior elders* who are members of the last initiated class; the *senior elders* who are members of the next one above; the old men who might further be distinguished for they are the few surviving members of the other three classes above.

The *junior elders* "are mostly concerned with family matters, establishing their own guns, marrying and performing ceremonies to ensure the fertility of their wives."[1] In other words, their

[1] Fosbrooke, l. c., p. 31.

[illegible] immediate interest are in the main of a private nature, and their share in tribal or public affairs is a minor one. They try to enhance their social status by increasing cattle, marrying older wives, and having their sons initiated.

The senior elders have a full share in political life. It would even be correct to say that this is their privilege, and theirs is the class in power. Their sons are ready for initiation. Therefore it is upon their class that falls the duty of undertaking the institution of a new class by controlling and performing all the proper ceremonies. It is from such duty or privilege that the so called prime-relationship is derived. It is a mutual relationship by which, on the one hand, the elders pledge themselves to assist the candidates, and to their sponsors, and, on the other hand, the latter revere the elders' authority and follow their advices. Thus the prime-elders control the main branch of social and political activity, namely the institution of a new class. And, because the initiates, both junior and senior, constitute the strongest body of the military force even this other branch of political structure, namely military organization and activity, falls to some extent under the elders' authority. The peculiar nature of Masai society makes it out of place the search for individual political leaders, but if we want to express ourselves with usual terms, we could say that the prime-elders are the true political leaders of the Masai.

The three classes of the old men are the classes which have retired. In practice they take no further active part in political life, but are concerned with religious ceremonies in which their presence is greatly considered. Their number is naturally decreasing and the few survivors of the last classes are generally dotards. When possible, these survivors, particularly the former leaders, are consulted when tradition is to be ascertained.

Analysis shows that the prerogatives of the age-classes are common and proper to all their members, and it shows also that the number of class-members, after the class is constituted, is so closed as no member is any longer accepted into the class.

Junior elders succeed seniors in political leadership when the institution of a new class is officially opened. The phenomenon takes place through the rhythm of the age-system ceremonies.

In this connection Fosbrooke,[1] speaks of a handing over ceremony performed by the senior and junior elders. "The sen-

[1] Fosbrooke, l. c., p. 88.

A. Thomson Ms. 3 (1881-1884)007
P.S.J.2 Mirvac P.S.J.2

arrived, from the Indians, but, of course, did not keep friendly, but divided among the constituents of the band.

And so with war and sickness, life passed in happy fashion, the depression kept serious, and the expression functions, though he exercised an unfortunate function every morning, the abnormal criminality to a dignified measure. His words indulged in vulgar laughters, and smiling was hardly possible on a face which could only be called beautiful.

He gained some twenty years in this manner. At last his fathers was found to be on the point of death, and he was sent for. Shortly after his arrival, the old man succumbed.

Not remarkably, however unique.

It was not thought necessary to recognize this occasion after ceremonies in any way whatever, and therefore Mirvac had no time in getting up the corpse and throwing it outside the band. Even washing, he decided grimly as he going out, he looked quite sweet, healthy-colored friend, and glanced at some departing Indians standing among, in company with considered deaths, while mirvac himself greatly considered.

He was now sole heir of the Indian's lands, for his youngest brothers did not receive a single head of cattle, though they had registered in their wills considerable numbers of them. Any they might receive now, however, would be their own property. Mirvac hastily gathered the few and easy bits of the warrior's band, but, what he discovered, was that he was

In Thomson K-3 (1881-1884)287
F'LLS Mount F'LLS

becoming bald or developing grey hairs, but that he could not take the equitation free of prejudice as formerly. From this, coupled with the fact that he could not take exercise with his stomach, he gathered that he was not quite as strong as formerly. Who can imagine how he would curse his luck and look foolish on discovering this regrettable truth. There was nothing for it but to marry, and become a staid and respectable member of society. So Sid sewn his wild oats.

Casting about, he fixed upon a damsel after his heart. The preliminaries having been arranged—the number of bullocks to be paid, &c.—she was added to him. Then an operation was performed on the damsel. Recovered from its effects, she had to wait till the solving season, an abundance of milk to an indispensable requisite to the honeymoon. Meanwhile, she allowed her hair to grow till it assumed the appearance of an old shoe-brush, clothed up with blacking. Round the head she wore a band of cowries from which depended a number of strings, forming in fact the bridal veil. At last the happy day arrived, and the fond pair was put upon the marriage by both parties dispensing of their chain earrings, and substituting a double disc of copper wire arranged spirally. The lady also shaved her head, laid aside the garment of the time, and clothed herself with two skins, one suspended from the waist the other from the shoulder. Strangest of all, however, and strikingly indicative of the fact that he had exchanged the spear for the distaff, Moses had actually to wear the garment of a child for one month. Just imagine what fun it would be in this staid and dignified country of ours, if a young man had to spend his honeymoon in a suit-off suit of his wife's earliest clothes. What our friend's feelings were in this guise, I do not know, and this voracious chronicle does not admit of conjecture.

And now Moses's wife who was to rear a brood of young cattle-thieves, and on that he got them, he was not very particular as to the manner of it. He was not jealous, asked no awkward questions, and employed no spies. If a friend should visit him, he was hospitable to a degree not consistent with a high level of morality. We shall here probably follow his example of non-inquisitiveness; for we might find that the domestic affairs of our friend's household will not bear a too curious scrutiny.

He was now wholly a changed being—as indeed, who is not when he gets married! His stock value of that was

A. Thomson (K. J. [illegible])
F L J J Mount F L J J

abandoned, and, though cast out with even all the male
items of his estate, he could save many it with respectable food,
obtained by his wife from neighbouring agricultural villas.
Lucretius, also, he might now indulge in. He opened a
fancy workbox and tobacco-box of ivory or elaborated bone,
and delighted to say by contents or he handed it to a
friend. He shaved himself always with extreme
though he never smoked. Then, or after an expensive,
liked to laugh-alone with his friends, and have a jolly
over beer or wine.

It is pleasant to know that with this change in his mode
of life there was a corresponding elevation (very much for
the better) in his views of things. He delighted to talk with
the ladies whom before he had planned to killing or annoy-
ing, and would to taken of good-will cordially exchange the
courtesies of life by spitting upon them and being spat upon.
In his conversation he showed an intelligence for exquisite to
any questions of the Roots alive. He had no superstitions,
and was conservative about his affairs and habits. He
would even at times exercise a friendly guardianship of
passing ladies, and was able to ward off many a disaster by
judicious warning. He was not elected to his presents, and
generally gave far more than he got. He has been known
even to protect decayed persons, and lead sick men left behind
by others.

The softening down of his ferocity reacted upon his face.
The habitual scowl gradually died away, and was replaced by
a more pleasing and genial expression. His thoughts turned
more to the strange mystery of life. He, also, had little
that was cheering to look forward to. He believed in the
existence of a Supreme Being, and yet had not the faintest
conception of an after-life. Unlike the men of the Roots
race, he did not believe in ghosts or spirits. He had no
theory of dreams, and did not imagine like the negro that
when he dreamed he was really experiencing all that was
passing through his brain, and that his soul or spirit was
actually travelling around somewhere, having a good time of
it, unchanged by his body. Hence believed nothing of that
indeed, whether he had any clue on the subject, I have not
been able to determine. When the man died, he was
finished utterly, except so far as he might go piecemeal to
build up the body of a horse, a vulture, or a carnivorous snake.
The Roots believe in annihilation. To bury a corpse would,
they think, be to poison the soil: it must be thrown to the
wild beasts without ceremony.

Gr Thompson 1/-3 (1883-1884)1887
F'LLS Mount F'LLS

In connection with the doubtful belief of the Mossi in a God, it may be noted that they have also some minor deity called Bukundi—apparently, so far as I could learn, an earth spirit. They have faith in witchcraft, through the efficacy of the fetish, or medicine-man, but not in any innate ability of his own, but in his power of intercession with Bukundi, who looks through him, and imparts magical virtues to certain objects. Their conception of the Deity seems to be somewhat vague. I was told, My being was Bukundi. Bukundi was in the morning below. His home was in the central spaces of Kiumangbara. In fact, whatever stands them as strange or incomprehensible, that they at once connected and more connection with Bukundi. Their progress to him was incessant. Nothing could be done without hours of kowtowing, whether it was to seek direction where to slaughter their enemies, or to ward off a disease. The most sacred thing among them is the grass. Held in the hand, or tied in a spray to the door, it is a sign of welcome and peace. Thrown at any one, or into some mysterious place, it is an invocation for a blessing on the person, or a propitiatory offering. Next to the grass comes the milk. No libation may be taken with it. The milk must be drawn into calabashes specially reserved for its reception, into which water is not allowed to enter—crockery being reserved by revelation. To boil it is a heinous offence, and would be supposed a sufficient reason for committing a suicide. It is believed that the cattle would cease to give milk. The cows, if they be remarked, are never milked except in the dark.

When Daudi married his wife left after his marriage festivities, and he did time he accompanied one or two expeditions. But that was exceptional. His true bereavement was chiefly occupied in storied and interminable discussions on the most trivial questions, or wandering long distances on visits to his friends, while his wife stayed at home to milk the cattle, or occasionally made journeys to neighbouring hostile tribes to buy grain. She, however, was in her element when a marriage came round, and there she enjoyed the double pleasure of an intrigue and a lovely present of iron wire and beads.

In time Mossi's first wife became old and ugly, and he took to himself a second—the former being stripped of all her iron wire by the progress of decking the new comer. At last the day arrived for both of them, and one after the other, they formed the subject of hostile hymns' laughter. These hymns

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

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